



Directorate of  
Intelligence

684

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# Afghanistan Situation Report



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10 September 1985

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**PERSPECTIVE**

**THE WAR IN AUGUST**

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Fighting was at a high level on both sides throughout the month. The Soviets conducted several medium- to large-scale operations in attempts to dispel the resistance and cut off supply lines; the insurgents carried out attacks on Gajoy and Kabul.

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**FIGHTING SHIFTS TO THE SOUTH**



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 The Soviets hoped to avoid involvement in the combat around Khowst, but the ineptitude of Afghan regime forces and the intensity of the insurgent siege apparently has prompted the Soviets to intervene. The Soviets probably will attempt to surround insurgent positions and sweep the area while Afghan units serve as blocking forces near the border. 

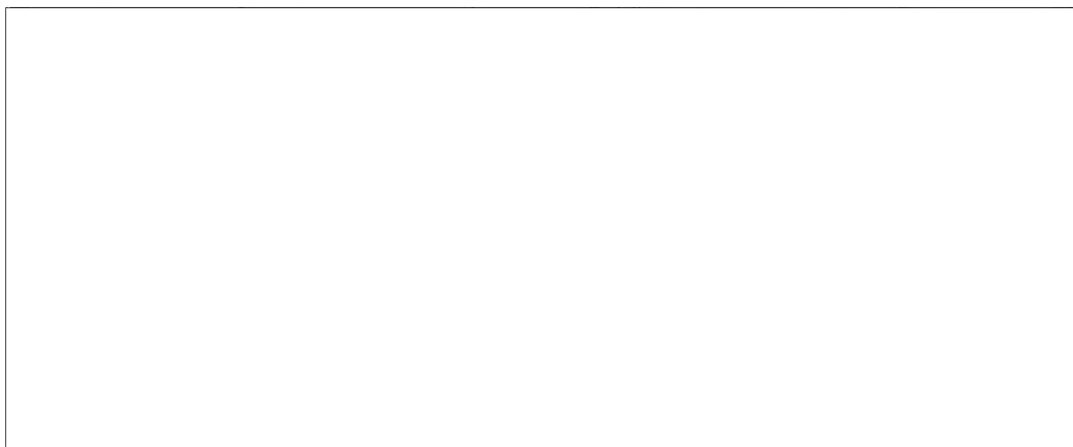
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Casualties on both sides are likely to be heavy as Soviet and Afghan troops try to oust the well-armed insurgents, and violations of nearby Pakistani territory probably will increase. According to press reports from Peshawar, resistance sources claim that the guerrillas launched a surprise attack on Afghan forces at Khowst last Thursday, inflicting high casualties. Insurgent losses are also high, and the guerrillas were reinforcing their positions around Khowst on Sunday. Fighting will intensify as more guerrillas arrive in the area from Pakistan. 

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**NEW SPETSNAZ GARRISON**

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Gajoy, in Zabol Province,   
 a newly constructed garrison for the 550-man seventh  
 Spetsnaz battalion in Afghanistan. The garrison is  
 capable of supporting 1,000 to 1,500 troops and  
 contains POL, ammunition, communication, and helicopter  
 facilities.

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**Comment:** The garrison, strategically placed along the  
 Ghazni-Qandahar highway, probably is positioned to  
 secure lines of communication and conduct combat over a  
 area that stretches from Qandahar to Ghazni and south  
 to the Pakistan border.

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**POSSIBLE NEW HELICOPTER IN AFGHANISTAN**

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US Embassy officials in Kabul sighted a new attack  
 helicopter in flight over the capital in late August.  
 The helicopter was reported to be smaller and more  
 streamlined than the MT-24 attack helicopters that are  
 currently in-country. The new helicopters were  
 reportedly painted shiny green, not the standard olive  
 drab or desert camouflage of Soviet and Afghan  
 helicopters. According to press reports, the  
 insurgents are claiming that a new attack helicopter  
 was used in recent Soviet operations in Paktia  
 Province.

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**Comment:** The description of the helicopter is somewhat  
 similar to that of the MI-28 Havoc, a helicopter now in  
 development in the Soviet Union (see Figure 1). The  
 Soviets may have decided to test the Havoc in combat  
 before moving to full production. The Havoc, which is  
 heavily armed and armored and designed for close air  
 assault and airmobile support operations, is more  
 maneuverable, quicker, and can operate in more  
 stringent visibility and weather conditions than the  
 12-year old Hind.

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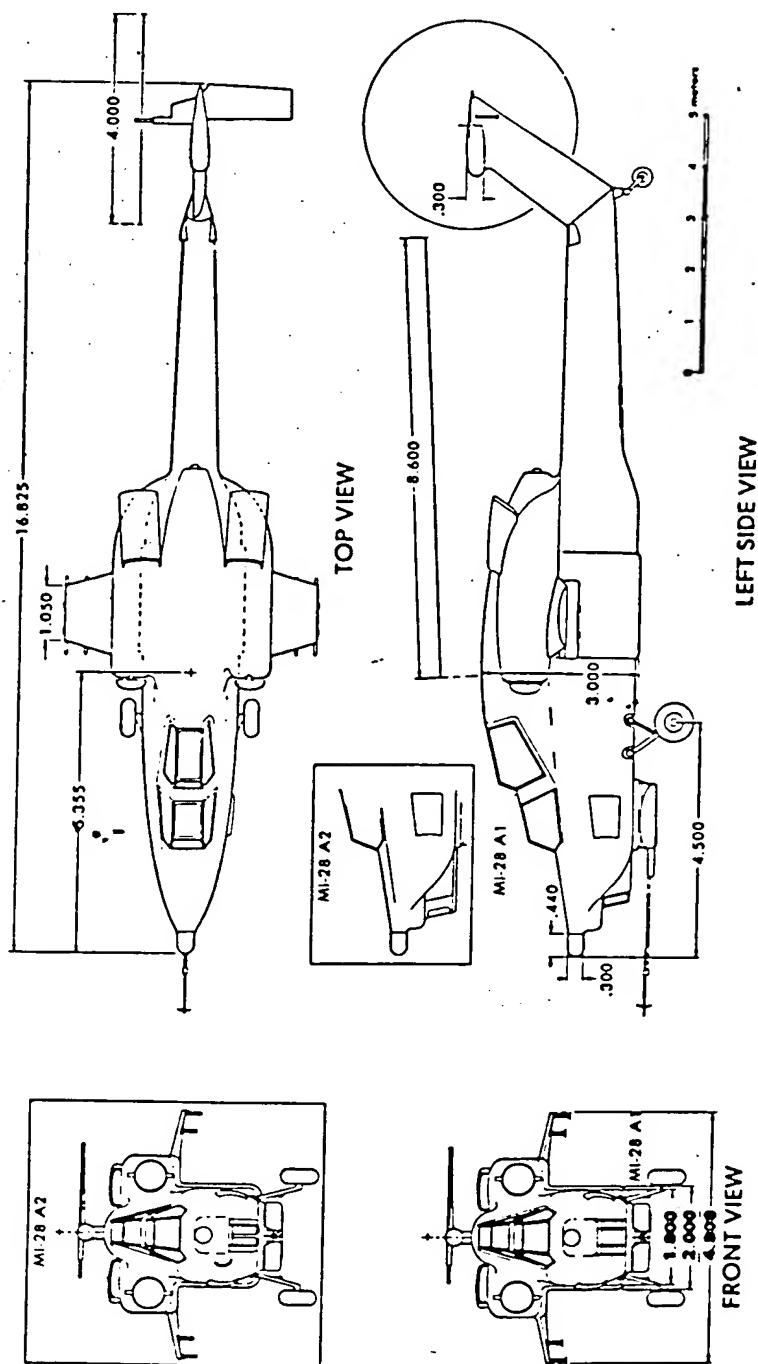


Figure 1: The Havoc A (MI-28) Helicopter. Dimensions noted above are in meters, and are accurate  $\pm 10\%$ .

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**WATER SHORTAGES, UPSET POWER, AND FOOD SUPPLIES**

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A severe water shortage in Vardak Province has disrupted local agriculture and power production,

[redacted] Farmers there expect serious local food shortages, despite adequate harvests in the rest of Afghanistan. In northeastern Vardak, the area surrounding the Tachah River hydroelectric facility has been without power since May because the water level is too low to generate electricity. In Kabul, [redacted] water shortages, which are worsened by large numbers of people moving from rural areas to the relative safety of the city. [redacted]

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**Comment:** Despite local reports of water shortages and crop failures, widespread and abundant spring rains have probably averted what would otherwise have been a disastrous harvest. Most local food shortages are primarily the result of disruptions associated with the war and manpower shortages. Because the war has also worsened transportation problems within the country, food distribution has been hampered. Consequently, we expect local food shortages to continue, even though harvests appear adequate overall. [redacted]

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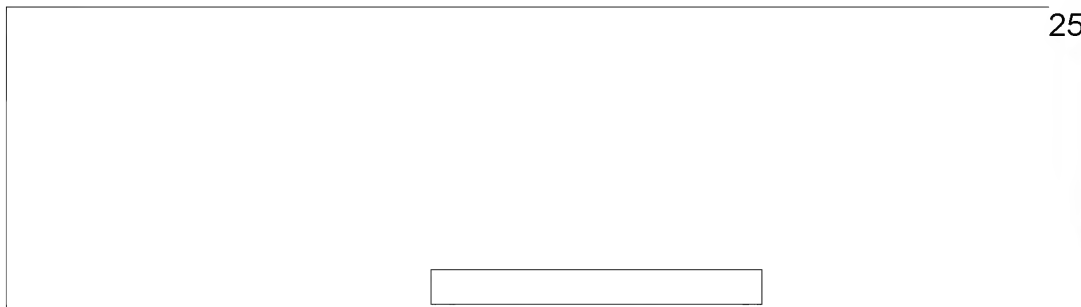


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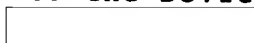
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-- The Soviet Union and Afghanistan signed a bilateral agreement in late August that allocates previously committed Soviet aid to develop Afghanistan, according to press reports. Afghanistan exports over 90 percent of its natural gas to the Soviet Union to settle barter accounts. 

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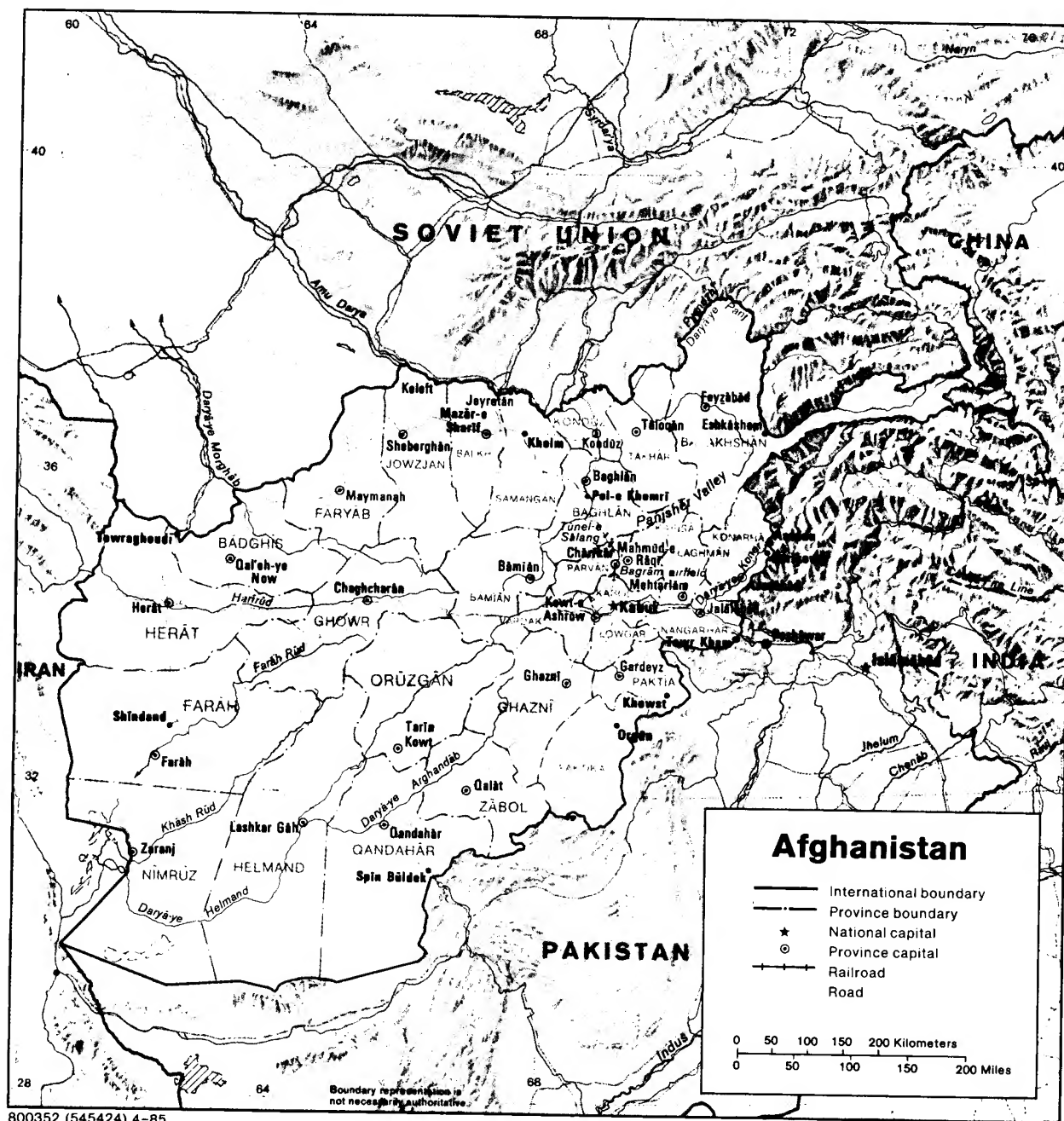
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**Outlook**

The Ali Kheyl operation, the third in this area in a year, may have yielded the Soviets some temporary gains in disrupting insurgent supply routes and reducing insurgent pressure in Paktia, Lowgar, and Nangarhar provinces. [redacted] the insurgents took heavy casualties. Nevertheless, in the absence of a permanent garrison in the area, the insurgents will be able to resume operations shortly.

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The campaign fits the classic Soviet pattern of supplementing small unit operations in Afghanistan with periodic large sweeps. Soviet and regime forces probably will continue regimental-size operations, particularly if the Soviets judge the Ali Kheyl campaign a success. In the next three to four months, Soviet and regime forces almost certainly will be preparing for the even larger campaigns that characterize operations in the fall. For their part, the insurgents are likely to increase their activity in areas where Soviets have less than adequate control.

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